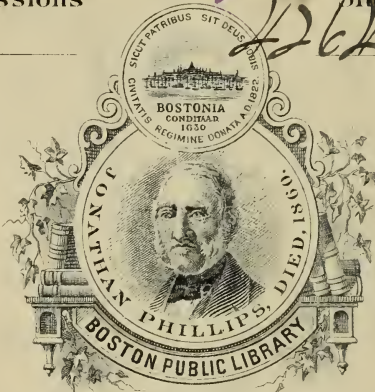


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SPEECH

OF

GEORGE THOMPSON, Esq.,

AT A

GREAT MEETING FOR THE EXTINCTION

OF

NEGRO APPRENTICESHIP,

HELD IN THE

TOWN HALL, DEVONPORT,

On Wednesday, May 2nd, 1838.

LONDON:

CENTRAL NEGRO EMANCIPATION OFFICE.

25, TOKENHOUSE YARD;

WILLIAM OLIPHANT AND SON, EDINBURGH; GEORGE GALLIE, GLASGOW:

FINLAY AND CHARLTON, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

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SPEECH, &c.

MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN; favoured with your permission and your patience, I will offer a few remarks upon the interesting and momentous topic now under discussion. I am anxious to see this question divested of a political complexion, and placed upon that high ground, which it should ever occupy before a Christian and a British assembly. For myself, I may say, I am influenced by no personal, party, or political feeling whatever. During seven years of my short life, I have been the advocate of the negro's rights—his advocate in labour, and peril, and much weakness; and during that period, I have never delivered a political speech, and I consider it a high compliment to be told by one who has heard me speak frequently, that he knows not yet, what political sentiments I cherish. I can tell this assembly however, that I stand before them with feelings of pure loyalty to my Sovereign, with profound respect for her Government, and with a desire to yield, in the fear of God, obedience to the law of the land. While I feel this as a Citizen, I remember at the same time, that I am the servant of the King of Kings, and the friend and brother of the outcast and oppressed negro, and that I am bound to vindicate the

integrity of the Divine Law, and to labour to release the prisoner held in cruel and unjust chains.

When last among you, though a stranger, you kindly received me, you patiently heard me, you flatteringly commended me. If I had then aught of title to your indulgence and good opinion, permit me to say, that my claim is not diminished. I appear before you with the same uncompromising hatred of slavery, and the same devotion to the cause of the injured negro.

Never did I present myself before an audience of my countrymen to discharge a more delicate or painful duty than that which truth and justice—a proper regard for my own character, and the character of those with whom I labour, and the interests of a million of the human race have this day devolved upon me. I desire to fling away every petty and personal feeling, and without passion and without partiality, to address myself to the subject before us, under a controlling sense of my responsibility to Him, by whose revealed will we should be guided in all our efforts to benefit the condition of our fellow-creatures.

The speeches of the gentleman who introduced the first Resolution, and my friend who seconded him, have rendered unnecessary any further details respecting the character and workings of the Apprenticeship System. I shall not, therefore, weary you with long quotations from parliamentary papers; still less, with a repetition of the stale stereotyped calumnies of Aldermanbury, or the apocryphal writings of Joseph Sturge, but direct your notice to the contents of the pamphlet now in my

hand, which has been already referred to by the gentleman who sits below me. This pamphlet purports to be a speech delivered by an honourable Baronet, closely connected with this Borough. The rank and character of its author, the situation which he fills, the circumstances under which it was uttered, and the facts and allegations which it contains, all entitle it to—I may go farther and say, lay us under a solemn obligation to bestow upon it—a calm and serious consideration. Of the honourable Baronet, as a private individual, I will speak with all possible respect. I am perfectly aware, that his virtues and excellencies have obtained for him a very high character amongst all who know him. But while I pay a deserved tribute to his private worth, I must claim the privilege of speaking of his public conduct, according to the views I entertain of the tendency of his Colonial policy.

The speech before us, was delivered in the House of Commons, on the 29th of March, in support of Lord Glenelg's Bill, and in opposition to the motion of Sir George Strickland—in support of the measure of the Cabinet—in opposition to the will of the country. It contains a number of grave and weighty accusations against the promoters and supporters of the present movement in favour of the immediate extinction of the Apprenticeship.

Sir George Grey charges the abolitionists—

1. With practising frauds at public meetings:—
2. With suppressing evidence:—
3. With delaying the publication of information until it could serve the purposes of popular excitement:—

4. With having “an invincible aversion to Parliamentary Committees, because they are there subjected to cross-examination ; because their allegations are there capable of being sifted and scrutinized ; and because there, evidence may be adduced to rebut some of those allegations, and a full and comprehensive view of the whole case may be presented :”—

5. With having “importuned Members of the House of Commons not to listen to the arguments on both sides of the question, not to decide calmly and dispassionately after they had heard it discussed, but to pledge themselves before-hand to support a motion which had never before been brought forward in Parliament, and on which no opportunity had been afforded for argument or debate :”—

6. With a determination to bring the Apprenticeship to a “*violent* termination :”—

Many other charges are insinuated, but these being the most distinct and tangible, I have selected them for the purpose of attempting a refutation of them before you the people of Devonport this day. You will admit, that these are fearful allegations to bring against persons professing to be influenced by benevolent and Christian motives. Either they are true or they are false. If true, what are we ? If false, what is the man who brings them ? For myself,—standing at the bar of my country,—I plead, “Not Guilty.” I disown, in my own behalf, and, if you please, in your behalf, the truth of these charges, and declare, that he who made them either knew us not, or knowing us, wilfully and cruelly misrepresented us.

But it may be said, “the honourable Baronet will certainly bring forward evidence in support of his accusations.” We shall see. He ushers in his speech by saying:—

“I rejoice that now, though for the first time, this question is about to obtain a fair, dispassionate hearing. I pledge myself, before I sit down, to show, that the facts of the case do not bear out the statements which have been made, and the resolutions which have been adopted at the meetings to which I have alluded.”

Here then, we have the statements which have been made, and the resolutions which have been adopted by the Abolitionists, placed on one side, and the facts proving their inaccuracy and unsoundness on the other. Fortunately for the interests of truth, all our statements and resolutions are upon record. Even our desultory conversations, during the meetings of Delegates in London, before and after dinner, and after tea, and after supper, (for we toiled, and spoke, and cogitated at all hours), have been reported; and often with such correctness, as to make us blush on the morrow to see our nonsense in print. Let me not be misunderstood. I speak of errors in phraseology not of principle, and I dare say, any friend who cried “hear,” has by this time discovered, that it is sometimes difficult to put our thoughts into the best language. I say, that fortunately for the ends of truth, our statements and arguments are all in print. Our summary of punishments—our contrasts of food—“our case made out”—our analysis of Colonial laws—our description of tread-

mills, and prisons, and hospitals are all in print, and have been scattered over the country. Of course, they were produced as evidence against us. All these, and more, were laid upon the table of the House of Commons in proof of the delinquencies charged against us; and, as the honourable Baronet proceeded with his speech, he called up document after document as witnesses against us. Such a course was rendered the more necessary by the fact, that the honourable Baronet repeatedly charged us with making unsupported assertions, and suppressing testimony favourable to the accused party. How will you wonder then to learn that the honourable Baronet not only did not quote against us the mass of our printed documents, but that he did not condescend to cite a "solitary case," to sustain the heavy charges he brought against us. He arraigned, tried, and condemned the accused, without producing one tittle of proof against him, and without permitting him to call one witness to his character. If this be justice, we have made an extraordinary discovery, and may henceforth save ourselves much trouble, and our country much expense, by constituting certain persons, what Sir George Grey constituted himself, accuser, witness, juryman, and judge. (A gentleman near the platform here called, "Order, order,") Sir, I shall endeavour to keep to order. I think I am perfectly justified in saying, that Sir George Grey should have supported his charges by proof from our printed documents. He should have said, "here is a *fabrication*," putting in a document; "here a *fraud*," putting in

another; “here a *falsehood*,” putting in a third; “here an *exaggeration*,” putting in a fourth; “this is a *solitary case*,” putting in a fifth; “these resolutions are unsound in principle; these, incorrect in statement.” I say, such a course was rendered necessary by the mode in which the honourable Baronet thought fit to argue the question. But, if it be contended, that our side of the case was too well known to require the production of any of our documents, and were I disposed for a moment to admit it, I am justified in requiring at least, that the honourable Baronet’s own documents make out a contrary case, and clearly demonstrate,—

1. The falsehood of our statements.
2. The necessity for continued restraint, and “modified coercion.”
3. The justice and impartiality of existing laws.
4. The independence and efficiency of the magistracy.
5. The general kindness of the masters.
6. The danger of immediate emancipation.

It appears to me necessary to make good these propositions, before the prayer of the abolitionists is pronounced unreasonable and unjust. But I must return to notice the specific charges brought against the prime agitators of the question. And, first, with respect to the frauds alleged to have been committed at public meetings.—

Mr. TRIPE put it to the meeting, whether the immediate question before them was not that of Negro Emancipation?—(Order, order.) As to whether the

Government of the country had been in error, in pursuing the course they had done, and were doing, with this question, any observations, it seemed to him, however strong, however luminous, would have a double intention.—(No, no.)—He should object, on principle, to placing Sir George Grey in an invidious position, with regard to his constituency—

Mr. THOMPSON:—I rise to order. If the gentleman speaks to order, let him do so; but if he intends to make a set speech——

Mr. TRIPE again rose, and made a few remarks, when the MAYOR declared that he did not consider Mr. Thompson to have been out of order. If he was not allowed to comment on Sir George Grey's speech, he did not see how he could substantiate his argument.—(Loud cheers.)

Mr. THOMPSON resumed,

Sir, I thought the most honourable, manly, and English mode of encountering opinions adverse to my own, if denied the opportunity of refuting those opinions in the place where they were delivered, was to come where my opponent was best known and most loved—where his friends were found thick as leaves in Val-lambrosa—that in such a place, if I attacked his private character, or sought to sully his fair fame, or to remove him from the pedestal to which the suffrages of an admiring constituency had placed him, he might be defended by honest and generous hearts, and eloquent and persuasive lips. I did not dream that it would be more honourable to commence the war in the East,

when my enemy's strong hold was in the West. I have already solemnly denied being influenced by any political feeling. Who, after that denial, dares impute to me a party object. My motto is, "Perish names and parties, and live the cause of man, and the Law of God." Who makes this a political question? I, who humbly strive to lift it far above the considerations of parties, and the atmosphere of politics, or they who would make it subordinate to the schemes of a faction, and sacrifice the interests of the negro at the base shrine of political expediency? Sir, you shall judge between us. It will not, I think be difficult to identify this day those who would make this a political question. I cannot permit myself to consider for a moment the effect of my speech upon the parliamentary interests of Sir George Grey. I have expressed my respect for his private character, and have pronounced an honest eulogium upon his talents: if that be not enough, his friends must indeed be greedy. I have given him credit for many virtues and good intentions, but I cannot forget, that in proportion to the influence of his name and character is his ability to do mischief, should his policy be a mistaken one—should he uphold a system which equity cannot sanction—which justice cannot approve. I have in my hand a printed speech which has been extensively circulated. I intend to comment upon the arguments and facts here brought forward, and as I see it also in the hands of the gentleman near me, who will, doubtless, track me in my course, let me say, that if I garble, or twist, or pervert

any passage, I will permit you to brand me on the forehead as an unfair and disreputable opponent. It is said, I am attacking Sir George Grey in his absence. This charge I deny. He is here present amongst us in this printed speech. He is in many other places besides: and, surely, while he is spreading contagion in many places, I may be permitted to supply the antidote in one.

1. Now for the charge, that we have practised frauds at public meetings. This must be noticed or I cannot proceed. If it is proved, then I have no business here. If this charge is deserved, you ought to hiss me from this platform; but if it be false, you ought to shield me from my calumniator. "Frauds have been practised at public meetings!" We ask, "when?" "where?" "by whom?" what was the nature of the frauds? To these questions no answer is returned. They are utterly unsubstantiated. Oh, I am glad to see my friend turning over the pages of the speech to find the "frauds." Let him shew me *one*, and

"As truly as to Heaven I would confess
The vices of my blood."

So truly will I acknowledge the sin we have committed, and amply atone to the honourable Baronet whom I here publicly accuse of propagating a cruel and injurious falsehood. The first charge then falls to the ground for want of proof.

2. Next the suppression of evidence. Sir George Grey considers us, I suppose, guilty of suppressing the

testimonies he has supplied in this speech. He shall have the full benefit of this argument. We will notice at leisure the evidence he has brought forward, for I intend, before I leave this platform, to make out my case from this book. There is, however, a specific case referred to; namely, the case of James Williams. It is alleged, that the facts in his narrative were purposely concealed until they could be made to serve the ends of popular excitement. A simple story will set this matter right. That excellent man Joseph Sturge, whose name is synonymous with whatever is pure in principle, and truthful in statement, and honourable in conduct, and humane in feeling, went out as a missionary of humanity, as he is justly termed, to the West Indies. While there, examining as he did, many negroes touching their condition, he examined James Williams. He gave important evidence, but the fact having transpired, it seemed likely that James Williams would suffer some disadvantage, Mr. Sturge, therefore, did what cannot be too highly commended—he bought out of the hands of his master the remaining term of his apprenticeship, and said to him, “You are free; you cannot now suffer for any thing you have said touching your own sufferings, or those of your fellow-slaves.” He brought the young man to England without any intention of publishing his narrative, and the idea of giving it to the world was suggested by another, who, in questioning James Williams, and drawing from him many facts he had never divulged to Mr. Sturge, deemed it of importance that the world should

have the benefit of the revelation he had made. The first copy of the pamphlet was sent wet from the press to the Colonial Office, and laid upon the desk of Sir George Grey. So much for the charge of concealment.

3. What proof does Sir George Grey give of our invincible aversion to Parliamentary Committees? None. Let us see if this charge is borne out by the "facts of the case." Who obtained the Committee that inquired into the horrors of the Slave Trade? *The Abolitionists*. Who, years ago, sought a Committee to inquire into the foul deeds perpetrated at Mauritius? *The Abolitionists*. Who moved for the Committee that produced the ponderous volume of evidence which my friend there (Mr. Dowson) has so industriously conned over? *The Abolitionists*. Who denied that Committee for more than Six Months? *The Government*. Hear Mr. Buxton.

"Failing in all my endeavours to avert the apprenticeship, I concluded my remonstrances; and recorded my sense of the impracticability of the System, by proposing to insert these words in the preamble, 'And whereas it is not unreasonable to expect persons to work without wages—'

The apprenticeship was, however, enacted, and came into operation in August, 1834. So soon were my fears confirmed as to the working of it, that *on the 19th of June, 1835, I moved for a Select Committee* 'to inquire whether the conditions on which the twenty millions were granted, had been complied with.' I showed that the terms of the agreement had not been fulfilled by the planters, and I added, 'I am sure I speak the sense of the House, when I declare

the twenty millions ought not to be paid.' I warned the House of the feeling that would arise in the country, in these terms: 'Should they find that slavery, or something very like it, continues; that the planters, having taken their money, disappoint their hopes; it will kindle a flame of indignation *against all such as withstand inquiry*, while the money is yet safe in our coffers, such as no government will be able to resist.

"The events of the succeeding year, were by no means calculated to change my views of the apprenticeship; and accordingly, *on the 22nd March, 1836, I moved the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the working of the apprenticeship system.* I then said, 'Nearly two years have expired, and it is time to inquire, whether any attempt has been made to evade our statute, or to defraud us of any portion of that freedom, which cost us so much. I say, there has been such an attempt, and, what is worse, the attempt has been hitherto successful:' and after some further remarks, I added, 'I now proceed to show, that it is not trifles they aim at; but that now—when the money is hardly in their pockets, when one would suppose they had hardly recovered from their amazement at their good fortune in getting twenty millions for that which was not a loss, but a gain,—even now, at the very outset, they are attempting to lay hands, not on trifles, but on the essential features and sacred principles of the Abolition law.' I then proceeded to show the glaring breaches of contract in their legislation; and added 'My second complaint is, that the law bad as it is, is better than the practice.'"

I am told, that Sir George Grey voted for the first Committee. Though not before aware of the fact, I am ready to give him the benefit of it. My case remains

the same. The charge against us is unjust. I have shown you, that the abolitionists have no aversion to Parliamentary Committees, and least of all for the reasons assigned.

In further proof of the anxious wish of the Abolitionists to promote inquiry upon the subject, I may state, that after the loss of the motion in June, 1835, the London Committees prepared an able Memorial, setting forth the character of the laws of the Colonies, and the actual condition of the apprenticed population, appending thereto a number of authentic documents: which Memorial was presented on behalf of the Anti-Slavery and Abolition Societies of the United Kingdom to Lord Glenelg. This Memorial is dated the 14th of August, 1835.*

* The following are the concluding paragraphs of the Memorial:—

“Your Memorialists now conclude a painful duty, which they owed to the Government, the public, and themselves. Unwilling without sufficient information to spread alarm, they forebore, perhaps too long, the expressions of their fears for the safe working of a dangerous experiment.

“But, if this delay has led to the conviction, that their jealousy was not misplaced, it must furnish an ample justification of the position they now re-assume, after allowing the planters the fairest trial of the new system, and the fullest opportunity of convincing the world, that a wrong estimate had not been formed of their incurable aversion to all safe and satisfactory methods of improving the condition of the bondsmen.

“Henceforward, the attitude of the friends of emancipation must be one of unabated and unceasing vigilance; may they be permitted to hope, it will likewise be one of cordial co-operation in the beneficent designs of Government? Their own course is fixed, for they are

Not yet satisfied with their efforts to promote a spirit of inquiry in the Colonial Office, and in the minds of Members of Parliament, the London Anti-Slavery Committee, on the 1st of March, 1836, published a pamphlet of 68 pages, entitled "Statements and Observations on the working of the Laws for the Abolition of Slavery, throughout the British Colonies; and on the present state of the negro population." At last the Committee was obtained, and the result was, the publication of the volume referred to by Mr. Towson. That gentleman has given you some extracts from the evidence in question, in vindication of the Government, and of their present measure. Has that gentleman read the evidence through? Has he pondered well the analysis of the Laws of Jamaica, as furnished by Mr. Jeremie? Has he digested the evidence touching the actual condition of the Negroes? If he has, I think he must admit that our case is established. I know the Committee refused to recommend the abolition of the apprenticeship, and, that Mr. Buxton (unfortunately, as I think) agreed to the report; but in justice to that distinguished Philanthropist, I must give his own explanation of his reasons for that course, and his deliberate views of the Apprenticeship System. I quote from a Letter to Lord John Russell, dated April 18th, 1838.

solemnly pledged to themselves and to the country, to spare no prudent exertions, and to leave no constitutional means untried, until the last vestiges of slavery shall have merged in perfect and unconditional freedom."

“ From the first day on which Lord Stanley’s scheme was propounded, to the present hour, I have had but one mind on the subject, viz : that the apprenticeship was unjust in principle,—indefensible in policy,—an anomalous, unnatural, and unnecessary state of things ; and in practice, as the practice has unfolded itself, worse than in theory. For a proof of this assertion, I need only refer to my reported speeches and proceedings in 1833, and I might add ever since.

“ The inquiry for which I moved was conceded, and the charge of inconsistency now made against me, is chiefly grounded on the report of that Committee, in which I am said fully and *bonâ fide* to have concurred. It is true, I did acquiesce in it, but under certain circumstances, which I will now explain. Two of the members who generally agreed with me on this point, were unavoidably absent, and after I had given notice of my intention to divide the Committee, on the paragraph approving of the apprenticeship, it was intimated to me by the remainder of my usual supporters, that I should be alone in my vote. My object therefore, being, not a fruitless show, but the greatest possible amount of real good, I considered it to be best for the interest of the negro, to abstain from dividing the Committee, (which indeed I could hardly have done, for want of a seconder,) on condition, that I should be at liberty to frame the words in which the report should claim entire and unqualified freedom after the expiration of the apprenticeship. I thought it right to exchange the ceremony of a fruitless division, for the practical benefit of this declaration.

“ As far, therefore, as my opinions are of any consequence, I trust that it is now clear, that from the beginning, I have denied the justice,—the policy,—the necessity,—and the success of the apprenticeship scheme. Three great errors have, as I think, been committed.—1st. The establishment

of the apprenticeship at all.—I have shown, that from first to last, I protested against it. *2ndly*. The declaration of the Home Government, that the Jamaica Act was adequate and satisfactory ;—when this came to my knowledge, I protested that it was inadequate and unsatisfactory, and moved, an inquiry. *3rdly*. The payment of the money before we had attained the object for which it was granted.”

The charge of invincible aversion to Parliamentary Committees, is, I have reason to believe, founded upon the protest which the abolitionists felt it their duty some months ago to enter against the re-appointment of a Committee, to inquire into the laws and practices of the Colonies under the Abolition Act. No individual had a better opportunity of knowing the reasons for that protest than Sir George Grey ; and had he stated them as made known in a Memorial to Lord Melbourne, read in his presence in November last, he would have shewn, that the abolitionists were not the enemies of truth, but the lovers of justice, when they solemnly protested against the re-appointment of the Committee of Inquiry. The following passage from the Memorial referred to, is a triumphant refutation of the charge brought against them :—

“ We further beg to state to your Lordship, that the proof and evidence for the justification of such a measure,—if it ought not rather to rest on the eternal principles of justice and truth, and the solid basis of our own free constitution, —are, in our opinion, already made so abundant and complete by Official and Parliamentary documents, as to render any Committee of Inquiry in either House of Parliament *unnecessary* — that we should deprecate such a course of

proceeding *as calculated only to serve the purpose of mischievous delay, to defeat the ends of justice, and to prolong the misery of the negro*; and we do THEREFORE, most earnestly and respectfully entreat your Lordship to resist such a proposal.”

4. We are charged with importuning honourable members not to hear both sides of the question. In the name of the abolitionists of this Empire, I deny the justice of the charge. That honourable members have been reminded of their duty to the negro, and of the wishes of their constituents; and have been earnestly requested to vote in favour of immediate abolition, I most frankly acknowledge. I will say more—and beg to be understood as stating my solemn and deliberate opinion. The man who is not prepared to release the negro from every unjust and blood-guilty compact by which he is held in unpaid and involuntary servitude, in defiance of the righteous law of God, is untaught in the very elements of morality, and unfit to be a Legislator for a Christian people. Sirs, I am glad you cheer that sentiment. Yes, there is a code above all other codes—“a law above all other laws”—and every earthly arrangement which weakens or sets aside the authority of that Law which has been given to keep the world in order, and that Gospel which is to bring the millenium to its birth, is fit only to be abhorred and broken up; and the man whose allegiance to God is not strong enough to overcome the difficulty of an unholy human contract, is, I repeat it, unfit to represent a Christian community in the year 1838.

The efforts of abolitionists through fifty years have been directed to the work of exhibiting both sides of the question. It was the work of Mr. Clarkson to reveal the dark side for the first time, to men who had previously heard only of the benefits conferred upon the African by the now-accursed Slave Trade. The life of Mr. Wilberforce was spent in impressing upon the House of Commons the duty of looking at both sides of the question. The promoters of the present effort have been as anxious as any of their predecessors that both sides should be impartially examined. Yet, when the nation cries for justice, and weeping mercy entreats on behalf of the African in bonds, a voice from the Treasury Bench is heard saying: "allay your excitement,"—"silence your complaints,"—"withdraw your claims,"—"we have not yet heard both sides of the question." It is not our fault if both sides of the question are not understood. Volume upon volume has been filled with evidence for the special benefit of those, whom we are charged with a desire to warp from the path of even justice. The volume which Mr. Towson seems to think makes out so good a case for the Government and Special Magistrates, has been upon the table of the House of Commons for nearly two years. These and all the other documents upon which our representations are founded, are, and ever have been accessible, and ought to be, by this time, perfectly familiar to our Legislators; and if we now call upon them to give a decision in favour of freedom and justice, I think, we ought not to be charged with

seeking to stifle discussion. What after all is the question? It is simply this. Ought men to be compelled to work without wages? When honourable gentlemen have decided that point according to the word of God, which declares the labourer to be worthy of his hire, and calls upon masters to give unto their servants that which is just and equal, they will be prepared to act righteously upon this subject, and not till then. In dismissing this charge, I shall only further say, that we flatly deny its truth, and challenge investigation into the means we have taken to secure an equitable decision upon the claims of the defrauded negro.

Lastly, it is said, we are determined to bring about a "violent termination" of the present system. If these words have any meaning, we are represented as the friends of spoliation and blood. Is this charge really merited? If it is, then let the execration of the community be ours. But if it is not, then we have a right to charge Sir George Grey with the deliberate utterance of another false and cruel charge. That honourable Baronet ought by this time to know, that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. That we are not preachers of sedition and vengeance to the negro. Were we, however, disposed to recommend resistance to tyrants, we need not travel far for precedents. There have been such things as Polish meetings, and Greek Loans, and gatherings to celebrate "the three glorious days of July," and to applaud the revolutionary Belgians, and to send consecrated banners to the field

of blood, and to offer sympathy and support to exiled Patriots. Yes, and it is considered the peculiar glory of our country, that its shores are an asylum for the oppressed of all nations,—that the patriot Pole, driven from his home by the haughty Czar—the exiled Greek, far from his sunny Isles—that every struggler for freedom, red from the field where tyranny has unhorsed him, may find a welcome and a safe retreat upon our soil. Tell me, men of Devonport! did the exiles of Siberia, or the brave youths of Paris, or the victims of the turbaned Turk, ever fight in a holier cause than that in which the negro would be engaged, were he to take the field against the men who kept him in slavery? Tell me, if any or all of these whom I have named, ever offered as a justification of their resort to arms, a list of grievances longer or blacker than that which every apprenticed negro in the West Indies presents, to kindle the sympathies and enlist the moral energies of this generous nation? Yet we have never preached the doctrine of resistance. Our precepts have been always pure and pacific. Our messengers have been men of God. Our gifts have been Bibles and not bayonets. While striving through long years to wring from the Legislature of the country a recognition of the negro's rights, our advice to the sufferer has been, “Art thou called, being a slave, care not for it, but if thou mayest be free, use it rather.” Yet, in the face of all our endeavours to stay the effusion of blood, and to work out, by moral means, the liberty of them that are in bonds, we are told, that we carry

not the olive branch of peace, but the sword of war, and would effect the "*violent* termination" of the existing state of things. The propagator of this charge cannot know us. I am constrained to impeach his understanding that I may spare his heart. We repel the charge of being friends to violence. The friends of peace we have been—the friends of peace we still remain; and we tell the Government, that they must for many years to come keep back the hire of the labourer, and rob the negro of his rights, ere we become the friends of rapine, and vengeance, and blood. I have done, for the present, with Sir George Grey's charges, and proceed to look at the facts with which he seeks to overturn our case.

Let me briefly state that case? Fraudulent registration. Neglect or abuse of classification. Exorbitant valuations. The eight hours system. Excessive punishments. Flogging of women. Licentious and cruel practices in Houses of Correction. Abuses of the Hospital system. Denial of customary allowances and indulgences. Obstruction of Magistrates. Incurable obstinacy of Colonial Assemblies, and repugnancies in their Laws to the spirit and letter of the Abolition Act.

On all these points the abolitionists have furnished ample evidence, taken from parliamentary volumes, upon the law and practice of the Colonies—volumes which record a state of things utterly at variance with the purpose for which the Abolition Act was passed, and with the repeated assurances given from time to time by the Government, respecting the working of the system.

This statement of our case is almost entirely overlooked by the honourable Baronet. He deems it sufficient to quote extracts from Governors and Magistrates in proof of the improved condition, and industrious habits of the negro. The testimony he supplies, is, however, very convincing, and I do not despair of demonstrating the reasonableness and justice of our present movement from the pages now before us.

The first point which I shall illustrate by the quotations made in this speech, is,

THE FITNESS OF THE NEGRO FOR FREEDOM.

The following extracts are from the Report of Special Justice Daughtry :—

“ With partial exceptions, the conduct of the apprentices has continued to be favourable. They are gradually performing their labour with more apparent willingness and good humour.

* * * * *

“ The disposition to work for money-wages is increasing. Some plantations which had been suffered to run almost into a wilderness before the commencement of the apprenticeship, by the diversion of the strength to other objects, as, for instance, the cultivation of ginger, have been nearly restored during the last few months, solely by labour obtained from apprentices *in their own time*. It has become now, I think, a matter of general observation that *they do more on a free labour day than on a compulsory day*, and yet on occasions of this sort they are often far *less strictly superintended*. *They appear actually ashamed to skulk on a HIRED day.*”

Mr. Lyon reports :—

“ In taking a review of the interval that has elapsed since my last quarterly Report, I am happy to have the opportunity of asserting, that nothing has occurred to indicate any alteration in the *general good conduct and industrious disposition of the apprentices of this district*—a grateful fact, which furnishes me with no opportunity of original remark.”

Mr. Carnaby says :—

“ I have much pleasure in reporting, that the apprentices in my district are *well disposed*, and that their conduct for the last quarter has been both *quiet and orderly* ; they perform their work *cheerfully*.

* * * * * *

“ *Voluntary task-work* is becoming more general, and in the digging of cane-holes and cleaning the cane-pieces, *answers well*.

“ I have, within the last few months, observed an improved disposition on the part of the apprentices to labour in their own time FOR HIRE, for which they receive from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 4d. per day.

“ The greater number of attornies and managers give many of the old allowances. Those withholding, form the exceptions, and do so either from the poverty of the property, or their own bigotted and illiberal notions.”

Mr. Lyon, at a later period, writes,—

“ From the commencement of the apprenticeship I have been anxiously and unremittingly watching the development and the beneficial progress of freedom. In superintending the administration of the Abolition Law in this district, *during a period of more than two years and a half, I*

have had the gratification to report favourably of the conduct of the apprentices, to speak well of the condition of the estates, and, in announcing that crime had decreased, to represent that the decorum of social life was daily being better understood and observed by the labouring population, and that *the example of those who were released by purchase from their apprenticeship* was likely to have a beneficial influence upon the habits and feelings of the remaining bond-servants."

Mr. Grant, in April 1837, says,—

"It affords me much pleasure to have to state, for the information of his Excellency the Governor, that, since my last quarterly report, the apprentices generally in this extensive district have conducted themselves with very *great propriety*, paying *strict attention to their duty*, and respectful and obedient to persons in authority over them in almost every instance *where persons, by conciliatory and kind acts, show themselves deserving of, and entitled to, respect and obedience*.

"There is in general a good feeling between the apprentices and their employers. To an intelligent manager it is very evident that, on the cultivation of a good feeling between himself and his apprentices, altogether depends the success of his endeavours for the benefit of the property under his charge; yet *there are men who imagine that nothing can be done but by coercion*, who watch every action of an apprentice in the endeavour to find something wrong, and for this have him or her (if possible) punished. The exceptions, however, to a general good feeling between both parties in my district are, I am glad to say, very very few; in those few instances, however, where a bad feeling does exist, I have no hesitation in attributing its cause to the irritability of the managers, in whose minds

no thought of conciliation ever enters. *The apprentices generally perform their work willingly, and well; they know that they have a duty to perform, and, far from evincing any desire to elude that duty, they seem to perform it with pleasure,*"

On the 1st July, 1837, Mr Fishbourne says,—

“The general conduct of the apprentices in my district, since my last general quarterly report, has been *peaceable and industrious*; they perform their labour *well and willingly.*”

Mr. Edward Baynes says,—

“An *increasing desire for knowledge* and improvement is apparent among them; it manifests itself now in the general acceptance of the truths of Christianity, in the enlarged attendance on places of public worship, in the increasing attention to personal decency and comfort in their apparel and houses, and in the signally intelligent questions which they often put, on a variety of subjects, to those who have inclination or leisure to converse with them.”

These extracts amount I think, together, to conclusive evidence of the fitness of the negro for immediate and entire freedom. Sir George Grey here demonstrates—that the negro is willing to work for hire,—that he is ashamed to skulk when labouring for wages—that by voluntary exertion, properties suffered to become barren, have been restored—that just in proportion as the rigours of the system have been relaxed, the apprentice has risen from a sullen slave into a grateful labourer, and that

there is a thirst for knowledge, which can only be satisfied when complete freedom shall throw down the hindrances to general instruction. A gentleman present would have me read from the top to the bottom of every page, but I maintain, that, I have made my extracts with fairness. My object is to demonstrate the injustice of withholding liberty from the negro—the crime committed by plundering him of the righteous recompense, due to him as a cultivator of the soil. And now, I demand in the name of whatever is honest and English, if these human beings can be longer kept in their state of bondage without the commission of an enormous sin. If they are fit for freedom; and this pamphlet proves them to be as fit for that boon as any who now hear me—then, great must be the guilt of those, who sanction for another hour the continuance of a system which deprives them of the liberty of the British subject, and keeps back their hire by fraud.

Having given you the evidence which this speech contains respecting the character and conduct of the negro, I proceed to quote a few of the passages with which it abounds, proving the existence of many of the evils of which we have complained.

ADMISSION OF EXISTING EVILS.

In the extracts from the despatches of the Marquis of Sligo and Sir Lionel Smith, to Lord Glenelg, I find the following:

The Marquis of Sligo says,—

“ I know several attornies who continue *their old system*

of exacting the pound of flesh, which I unhesitatingly pronounce to be the worst possible policy, and that many a proprietor in England will deeply suffer if they do not throw on one side all the nonsense which is so prevalent about the negro character not being known."

Again,—

" These people have, in many instances, had all their former allowances of food and indulgences stopped from them, and for some unwillingness to labour, or some reason whether deservedly or not, their Saturdays are often taken from them ; how then are they to exist BUT BY THEFT?"

Again,—

" Your Lordship having been pleased in your despatches of the 24th April and of the 14th June, to direct me to turn my attention to some enactments to remedy the deficiencies in the Abolition Law, for the purpose of preventing the perpetration of such cruelties as are therein alluded to, I have the honour to state, and I do so with much pain, that the necessity for such enactments becomes every day more and more apparent to me, and that the hope I entertained of the existence generally of ameliorated feelings, though justified in many instances, is not universal."

Sir Lionel Smith says,—

" Unfortunately we have nothing but the usages of slavery to insist on, without any positive law to enforce them. The only expedient we have is to direct the special justices not to award any punishment for insufficiency of work, occasioned by that want of necessary assistance which they are fairly entitled to."

And again—

" On well-regulated estates those usages and indulgences

have never been withdrawn, and the system is working satisfactorily ; but it is where managers or overseers, having *only a temporary interest in the properties*, disregard the present welfare of the labourers, and the future benefit of proprietors, that discontents and complaints are created, alike injurious to the working classes, and to the character of the community.”

The value of this extract would have been increased, had the honourable Baronet given the number of “well regulated estates,” in comparison with the number of those managed by persons “having only a temporary interest in the properties.” I believe the number of estates in Jamaica, managed for absentees, by persons possessing only a “temporary interest,” in their prosperity, are as ten to one in comparison with those under the management of resident and *bona fide* proprietors.

Again,—

“I believe *all parties would be glad to abandon the system to-morrow for further compensation*. When asked my opinion on that subject, I have deprecated its absurdity, because I felt convinced no Ministry could go to Parliament for an additional grant towards negro freedom ; or would it, in my opinion, be desirable, *if we could get the local Abolition Law revised and improved*. As it stands, *I denounce it the worst law of all the late slave Colonies.*”*

* It is highly important to refer to the attempt made by Sir Lionel Smith to amend the law, here referred to. On the 31st of October, 1837, Sir Lionel sent a message to the House of Assembly in Jamaica, containing certain proposals, “materially bearing on the welfare of the apprentices.” The following is an extract from that

I pause here a moment to notice the word *compensation*. No word is more frequently used, either by the West Indian or the Minister than the word compensation. But when is it ever used with reference to

message. It is worthy of the most serious attention. I would draw particular notice to the fourth paragraph.

“ 1st. The magistrates’ reports show that on some estates *the apprentices have been deprived of cooks and water-carriers while at work in the field* ; thus the time allowed for breakfast, instead of being a period of rest, is one of continued labour, as they have to seek for fuel and to cook.

“ The depriving them of water-carriers is still more injurious, as *the workmen are not allowed to quit their rows to obtain it*. Both these privations are detrimental to the planter’s work.

“ 2nd. A law seems wanting to supply the estates’ hospitals with *sufficient attendants on the sick apprentices*, as well as for the *supply of proper food*, as they cannot depend on their own grounds whilst unable to leave the hospitals. The 16th clause of the Abolition Law has not been found strong enough to secure these necessary attentions to the sick.

“ 3rd. In regard to jobbers, more exposed to hardships than any other class, a law is greatly required, allowing them the distance they may have to walk to their work, at the rate of three miles an hour, and for compelling the parties hiring them to supply them with salt food and meal. Their grounds are oftentimes so many miles distant it is impossible for them to supply themselves ; hence, constant complaints and irregularities.

“ 4th. *The mothers of six children and upwards, pregnant women, and the aged of both sexes, would be greatly benefitted by a law enforcing the kind treatment WHICH THEY RECEIVED IN SLAVERY*, but which is now considered optional, or is altogether avoided on many properties.

“ 5th. Nothing would tend more to promote general contentment and repress the evils of comparative treatment than the issue of

the negro? I may be told, that the Bill now on its way to the Colonies is intended to compensate the injured slave. But will it, if it accomplishes all it promises give compensation for the past? Will this Bill re-ignite life in the murdered victims of apprenticeship oppression? Will it give vigour, and beauty, and purity, to the wasted, the withered, and the polluted? Will it heal scars? Will it restore innocence? Is it compensation to the living or the dead, to say, "You shall not be treated so any more?" Is this, Sir, the compensation you would award in this Hall of Justice? Would you give gold upon gold to the

'fish' as a right by law. *It was an indulgence in slavery SELDOM DENIED*, but on many properties is now withheld, or given for extra labour instead of wages."—*Vide Papers relative to the Abolition of Slavery*, 1838.—Part V. (1) page 330.

Let us now see what expectation the Governor was afterwards led to entertain of the success of his recommendations. Writing to Lord Glenelg, on the 24th of November, 1837, nearly one month after the message above cited, he says,—

"Referring your Lordship to the messages which I early sent to the present House of Assembly, in view to the correction of certain clauses of the Abolition Law, bearing *oppressively* upon the apprentices, I am sorry to inform your Lordship that *I have no hope left* that they will correct the evils I exposed to them, to ensure more just laws for the remaining apprenticeship.

"Your Lordship will see that I cannot report officially on the subject till I get the official answer, but I thought it desirable to give your Lordship the earliest information on *what I am assured will be the fate* of my anxious endeavours to have the laws ameliorated, that your Lordship may make up your mind, and instruct me for my further guidance, when the subject is brought before you in a more tangible shape."

vindictive ruffian, and say to the wretch he had robbed and wounded, “Go your way and be thankful, you shall be protected for the future?” O Sir! what mockery and injustice are mixed up with the discussion of this question. What a system of villany and deception is this scheme of apprenticeship! (At this moment the audience were somewhat startled by a vivid flash of lightning, followed by a loud peal of thunder, and the atmosphere became suddenly darkened by the passing clouds.) MR. THOMPSON exclaimed,—Let not these things scare you my good friends. They are emblematical of our cause. The clouds have gathered blackness, and many hearts feel sad. But these clouds shall burst—the lightning of British indignation shall smite the throne of despotism reared in the West—the mild rays of freedom shall light up the Antilles;—and verdure, and freshness, and health, shall succeed the mildew, and the pestilence, and the darkness of slavery.

We proceed to the admissions of Special Justices.

Mr. Higgins says,—

“Whilst I am able to bear testimony to the general good conduct of the negroes, I have much satisfaction also, in having it in my power to commend the proprietors and managers generally, for conducting themselves towards their apprentices in a kinder and more conciliatory manner. Some of the subordinate planters, it is true, *still cling to the old system*, and cannot divest themselves of their former *prejudices towards the negroes*; they at present, however, I am happy to say, compose but a small section of the general body of the planters of this district.”

Mr. Baynes says,—

“ It is by no means my intention to imply that, even on estates where the reins of discipline are tightest drawn, the negro is labouring under actual oppression and cruelty ; my observations are limited to the *short-sighted, perverse, and unconciliatory system, but within the pale of the law*, pursued by some, which, *generating ill-will and resentment in the breast of the apprentice*, will too surely be visited, to his cost, on the proprietor in the sequel.”

Mr. Lyon, writing from a new district, says,—

“ I have, I trust, succeeded in putting an end to *the system of incarceration in cells, and assault by constables*, and yet I have not had a single complaint of indolence against a gang, and remarkably few complaints by managers against individuals.”

Mr. Harris says,—

“ The good feeling and friendly understanding, which it has afforded me such pleasure on previous occasions to afford my testimony to and approval of, still reign predominant in the district ; and in any case, where the stream thereof might happen to be obstructed, it could only be attributed to *the attempt at exercising by the employer something of the despotic sway of olden times, including a harshness of tone and manner, and ungraciousness*, which the emancipated bondsman or woman cannot be expected to endure, as the affrighted and trembling slave would and must have done. The labouring populations, after a three-years' enfranchisement from thralldom, know too well their rights and liberties ; they feel themselves raised and elevated in the scale of existence ; and what would once be accounted heinous offences, and punished with severity, can and should now only be considered as a respectful assertion of their rights.”

And again,—

“As to the indulgences usually allowed during slavery, my observations and remarks hereon must be the same as those heretofore submitted; they are most usually given; but, as *they are only indulgences, they are liable at any moment, and upon any occasion, to be wholly or partially withheld, and either temporarily or permanently.* Upon the whole, I believe they are allowed, and if at any time withheld, not for any very considerable length of time.”

Here then, in the very passages selected by Sir George Grey, for the purpose of proving the kindness of the masters, and the general good condition of the negroes, we find admissions of the existence of the most serious evils. The law is declared unjust. “Some Attornies still exact the pound of flesh.” The “Saturday is often taken away,” and the negroes are left to thieve. The Home Government, with all its negligence and supineness found it necessary to send out repeated despatches, enumerating “cases of cruelty,” and strongly recommending the amendment of the Law. That the necessity for such amendment is “every day more apparent,” and that as yet, no amelioration has taken place. That a system of “incarceration in cells, and assaults by constables” has existed, though such practices were altogether illegal, and needless for the management of the negroes. That there are only the “usages of slavery” to insist upon, and “no law to enforce” even those, and that therefore the indulgences granted under the former system “are liable at any moment, and upon any occasion, to be partially or wholly with-

held." Yet, notwithstanding this evidence of the direct and flagrant violation of the Imperial Act, both by the Legislature and individuals, we are told in the very paragraph, by which the extracts I have made are introduced, that

"There has been on the part of the West India proprietors and their agents in the colonies, a *bonâ fide* adherence to the spirit, as well as letter of the Emancipation Act, and that they have given their cordial concurrence, in carrying out the principles of that Act."

Seldom have I been more startled by any declaration, than by this of Sir George Grey's. I know that in the very papers from which the honourable Baronet made his extracts, he had the evidence before him of the existence of the most general and wilful evasions, and violations of the Imperial Act. Could the honourable Baronet, when he made this statement, be ignorant of the failure of the efforts made by the Marquis of Sligo to ameliorate the condition of the negro population? Was he ignorant of the fact, that all the messages sent to the Assembly of Jamaica by that noble Lord had been rejected with scorn and defiance? A *bona fide* adherence to the letter, as well as the spirit of the Abolition Act! Oh! where had modesty and truth flown, when this barefaced assertion was made?—made at the very moment when the utterer was moving the second reading of a Bill, whose very preamble, whose every clause, and section, and sentence, contained proof of the universal and systematic violation of both the purport and specific provisions of the Abolition Act. "A *bona*

fide adherence!" Then why insult, misrepresent, and criminate the Colonies, by making a new law to prevent the flogging of women,—to provide for the support of the sick in hospitals,—to save Special Magistrates from annoyance and defeat in the discharge of their duty, and the consequences of giving a righteous decision? Why then deprive, to a great extent, the Legislative Assemblies of their chartered rights, and place arbitrary and despotic power in the hands of the Governors? Let Sir George Grey reconcile, too, if he can, his bold and unqualified denials, with the Chief Colonial Secretary's admissions. Let him tell the world who is right—he when he declares, that the planters and their agents have yielded a *bona fide* adherence to the spirit, as well as the letter of the Abolition Act, and specially refers to Jamaica as an instance—or Lord Glenelg, when he declares, that with reference to Jamaica, "*evils existed* which might be made the grounds for claiming the abolition of the Apprenticeship System."* If Lord Glenelg be right, then we are justified in the course we have pursued, and Sir George Grey is contradicted by his superior in office, as well as by the Bill he is carrying through the Commons.

Let us now notice for a few moments the reasons which the honourable Baronet assigns, for refusing his consent to a measure of immediate Abolition.

He says, that we are bound in justice to continue

* Vide Speech of Lord Glenelg in the House of Lords, Tuesday, February 20, 1838.

undiminished and undisturbed the present system, because we have given the planters a lucrative interest in the services of the apprentices. He argues, that the twenty millions was but *a part* of the compensation, and that, deprived of the benefit of any portion of the Apprenticeship, the planters would be so far cheated of their due.

At last, it appears then, that this scheme of “modified coercion” was not intended, as we ignorantly supposed, for the good of the negro, but as *a bonus to the master*. The twenty millions sterling was equal to £25. per head all round, reckoning those past labour, infants, the maimed, the halt, the blind, and the leper, with the able-bodied and productive hands. This, at the time, was deemed generous and ample compensation. We have since been supplied with the proof, that for all the purposes for which they were at first obtained, the negroes are much more valuable as free labourers than before they were as slaves. But, says Sir George Grey, we are not at liberty to depart from our bargain. He sees “no pretence for taking away without compensation, a pecuniary interest conferred and guaranteed by a solemn Act of the Legislature.” Now, if it can be shown from Sir George Grey’s own speech, first, that the system is unnecessary; secondly, that it is attended with inconvenience and suffering to the apprentice; and, thirdly, that the planters have already received more than the market value of the slaves, we think the Imperial Parliament are more than justified in pronouncing the system at an end, and setting aside

an arrangement entered into evidently under mistake and misapprehension. The two former of these propositions we regard as established. In respect to the third, I shall draw your attention to a very extraordinary passage in the 40th page of Sir George Grey's speech. They are not his own words, but part of a quotation made with much apparent satisfaction from a document from the pen of Mr. Edward Baynes, a gentleman, of whose honour and intelligence, Sir George Grey speaks in the highest terms.

“Land daily increases in value, and THE LABOUR OF APPRENTICES, considered as property, has brought, and is bringing in, for the six years of the apprenticeship, a sum EQUAL TO THREE TIMES THE WHOLE LIFE VALUE OF THE SLAVE, as appraised by commissioned valuers in 1834.”

What think you, Sirs, of this testimony? What think you of the bargain now? Twenty-five pounds down upon the nail for every human beast of burden on the estate, and afterwards the exaction of labour “equal to three times the whole life value of the slave, as,” mark that! “appraised by *commissioned valuers* in 1834.” Do not, I pray you, forget this evidence. Let me tell you also that there is no expression of dissent from Mr. Baynes. No: Mr. Baynes is brought forward to prove the admirable working of the system—to demonstrate the deep pecuniary interest of the master in the unpaid labour of the slave. And what does his evidence, if it be correct, amount to. Why to this—that the working negro will, on the 1st of August,

1840, have paid for himself *three times* over. That, if he be liberated on the 1st of August next, his master will have obtained double his market value, exclusive of the compensation money. What colossal robbery is this! What an unutterably wicked system does Sir George Grey stand forward to defend! Add the value of the negro's labour, as stated in the passage I have read, to the stupendous sum of twenty millions, and you will then have before you the amount of which the planters and the Government have together basely plundered their unhappy victims.

In close connexion with the argument drawn from the planter's beneficial interest in the maintenance of the system, is that of—

THE CONTRACT

into which it is said the parliament and the country have entered with the planters and proprietors.

On this part of the subject, I would observe in the first place, that whether there is in reality any contract, is a question still in dispute. Many eminent men, among whom I may name Lord Brougham (ex-High Chancellor) Lord Denman (Lord Chief Justice) and Mr. O'Connell, argue that there does not exist any contract, and that, therefore, the parliament are at liberty to consult their own pleasure in the steps they shall take upon the matter. Others, distinguished for their learning, as Sir Edward Sugden, distinctly maintain the existence of a contract or compact, but argue that a case has been made out to the whole extent of the

right of the Legislature to set such engagement aside, for the prevention of cruelty and other abuses. I shall not undertake to decide the point at issue according to law. I may, however, state, that the Constitutional functions of the people's Representatives, are according to Blackstone, and all authorities upon the subject, for "the making, confirming, enlarging, restraining, abrogating, repealing, revising, and expounding of Laws, concerning matters of all possible denominations." Hence, it does not appear that parliament can tie up their own hands by any contract. They are to review their former legislation, and to confirm, amend, abridge, and abrogate, as they shall find that previous enactments have accomplished their intentions or otherwise. I would also take leave to doubt the competency of this parliament, to apprentice without their consent, 800,000 human beings, who, had they been left to choose for themselves, would have repudiated such an arrangement. We petitioned the Legislature for the extinction of slavery, not for the establishment of apprenticeship. But, while they nominally abolished slavery, they created by their Imperial authority, a system stamped with many of the most odious features of the slave's former condition. I say again, I doubt the moral competency of the Legislature to do this. What should we say, if, while discussing this subject, a messenger, booted and spurred, should bring us the intelligence, that the night before last, the collective wisdom of the land had seen it right to make us all apprentices for six years, without wages, and had placed us under

the rule of men who were sworn to enforce the law they had enacted? The apprentices, though deeply interested, have never been consulted. They have been denied the privilege of boys of fourteen years of age in this country. Further, we say, that taking the contract, so called, as it stands, there has been such a violation of its conditions on the part of the planters and their Assemblies, as fully warrants the Legislature in setting it aside. For the proof of this, we need not travel beyond the Bill now before parliament, which proceeds upon the ground of a general violation of the former Act—which asserts the necessity of an immediate and vigorous intervention of the Imperial Legislature, to prevent cruelty, restore that which has been taken away, and enable magistrates, whose influence and office have been hitherto despised, to do their duty. Sir George Grey laboured hard in the speech before us to prove that the majority of the planters were “honourable men,” although, at the same time, the Bill in his hand arraigned them as ungrateful and flagitious culprits. Surely, if there was neither proof nor suspicion of heinous guilt, it was most unjust and libellous in Sir George Grey to brand them as he did in the Bill of which he took charge.

Again, Did Sir George Grey, when he talked so much about the sacredness of the contract, know that his own Bill violated that contract in several vital particulars? Did he (to quote only one instance) compare the 13th clause of the Act of 1833, with the 38th clause of the present Bill? The former clause gives

authority to the Special Magistrate to bind out children under six years of age, on the 1st of August, 1834, or born after that time, if destitute, to the person or persons entitled to the services of the mothers; such indentures to continue in force until such children shall respectively reach the age of twenty-one years. The latter clause, provides for the termination of all apprenticeships on the 1st of August next, "any thing in the former Act, or in any Indenture to the contrary notwithstanding." Here is a direct violation of the assumed contract. The planter pleads that he has fed, clothed, lodged and nursed the child for a certain number of years, and points to the Act of 1833, which, in consideration of the expense and trouble to which he has been put, gives him the services of the child until it reaches the age of twenty-one. The Act of 1838, annihilates that engagement, and decrees the entire freedom of the child in the year 1840. Far be it from me to find fault with such a decree: but may I not ask if the power which interposes to set aside the indentures of the child who has received every thing, and rendered nothing, is not equally competent to set aside the indenture of the adult, who has rendered every thing, and received nothing?

The essential immorality of this pretended contract, is another and an all-sufficient reason for its immediate abolition. It compels hundreds of thousands of loyal and well-conducted subjects of this realm to give their uncompensated labour for six years. This is an odious and wicked Act, and the more mean and iniquitous,

because perpetrated upon distant, disfranchised, and comparatively friendless beings. Can such a contract be justified in the sight of God? I believe not. Being altogether immoral, it was, *aborigine*, invalid.

We are told that the present Bill will set all to rights. Those who place any reliance upon this assurance will find themselves utterly deceived. It does not set the negro free. It is, therefore, radically and incurably unsound. It does not pretend to give compensation for past injuries. It is, therefore, deficient in justice and compassion. It possesses no self-executing power. It is, therefore, a piece of worthless legislation. It may enlarge the authority of Governors and Special Magistrates, but it will neither change their nature, nor render them omniscient, nor give them the ability to enforce their will. It will be scorned by the proud, evaded by the subtle, and openly set at defiance by the bold and impudent despots of the West Indies. In whatever light we contemplate the Government measure, we are constrained to censure, reject, and condemn it. The remedy is freedom—inmediate, entire, and unconditional. Safety, political economy, national honour, philanthropy, and Christian morality, unite to urge upon the Government and Legislature the adoption of such a measure. For what did we petition? Freedom. What did the Government promise? Freedom. For what did we pay twenty millions in 1834? Freedom. What have we in 1838? SLAVERY! What then is our duty to the negro, to ourselves, and to God? It is plain. *To petition and*

agitate for freedom, till we get it. In this sacred cause “England expects every man to do his duty,” and to do it at whatever sacrifice of political partialities.

You may be told that your agitation of this question will bring discredit upon the Government, and, perhaps effect their downfall. With these consequences, permit me to say, you have nothing to do. We are not the foes of the Government, but the friends of the negro. Were *they* the negro’s friends how gladly would we labour to sustain them! How pleasant it would be to extol them! But while we believe their policy adverse to the rights and welfare of our coloured brethren, we can suffer no similarity of general views—no attachment to particular individuals to draw us aside, or paralyze our exertions.

In concluding this address which your patience has permitted to be so protracted, let me remind you of that solemn and vast assembly of which for a moment this meeting may be regarded as the type. In that

“Great day, for which all other days were made,”

we shall be summoned before the bar of an equal God to give account of the deeds done in the body, and **THE NEGRO WILL BE THERE.** Yes, the now scorned and fettered negro will be *there!* He will be selected as the representative of him who was “despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” In that hour, the individual who will stand forth to test our love of the Saviour, and the sincerity of our Christian profession—will not be the

man who had riches, or rank, or intellect, or beauty—but the poor, the unlovely, the fallen, the helpless—the hungry who wanted bread—the wretched who wanted sympathy—the enslaved who sighed for liberty. And, when the stern Judge shall point to the negro and say, “forasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of my brethren, ye did it not unto me,”—Think ye, it will suffice to say, “Lord! we would have given him liberty—we would have recognized his immortality—we would have clothed him with his rights—we would have brought him under the shelter of our Constitution, and have crowned him with honour and glory—BUT—our Representative saw not, felt not as we did—we should have disturbed his plans, and, perhaps, have shaken his seat had we followed the dictates of our hearts—had we asserted the rights of our brother!” Or will it be enough to say—“we would have done all our pity and our Christianity moved us to do, but we were too much attached to the Government, or too much afraid of violating a compact!”

I will not believe that there is one here prepared to rise and say, “I would be willing to meet my Judge with such excuses as these.” If then, these refuges of lies will not avail us in the last great day, let us not flee to them to-day. Let us forsake the path of political expediency, and bravely resolve to stand or fall by the heaven-born principles of the Gospel. So shall we secure the blessing of the perishing, and the approving verdict of our conscience, and our God; and, it may be, that ere our Virgin Queen is anointed with the consecrated oil,

and her right hand grasps the sceptre—and the shout of “Long Live Victoria,”—“Long Live the Queen,” rends the air; the news may be wafted over the Atlantic, that England has done justice to the slave—so shall the grateful hymn of the ransomed negro, echo the loud acclaim of Westminster Abbey.

[*Note.*—The able letter to the *British Emancipator*, appended to this Speech, will show with what impartiality Sir George Grey is in the habit of quoting official documents. It will repay a very careful perusal.]

APPENDIX.

ANIMADVERSIONS

UPON

SIR GEORGE GREY'S SPEECH.

In a Letter to the British Emancipator, of May 16, 1838.

As none of your correspondents have noticed at any length the remarkable speech delivered by Sir George Grey on Sir George Strickland's motion, I venture to submit the following observations upon it, for insertion in the *Emancipator* :—

It is only within a few days past that I have had the opportunity of perusing that speech as published in an authentic form, and my present object is rather to increase than to neutralize its effect ; for so far as I am able to judge from observation and report, its influence upon the public mind has been decidedly favourable to the anti-slavery cause, inasmuch as it is manifestly a display of special pleading, and the very opposite of a calm and fair exposition of the truth. Sir George Grey has replied to facts by the partial quotation of opinions ; he has misstated the character of testimony which he found it impossible to rebut ; and has endeavoured to divert attention by casting censure and odium on those who have dragged his official faithlessness into public view. None of the acts of an unscrupulous advocate has he disdained to employ in his attempt to prolong his "*intermediate state of modified coercion!*" After attempting to establish the existence of a "contract" with the West India party, Sir George Grey proceeds :—

"It has been confidently asserted, that one of the parties having violated the stipulations of the contract, Parliament is at liberty at once to cancel it. I object to the mode in which this is attempted to be proved. *We are bound to look to what were our reasonable expectations when the Act of 1833 passed!* The parties who assert a general breach of contract on the part of West India proprietors, altogether omit to take into account the state of society produced by slavery," &c.

How different is this language from the glowing announcement with which Lord Stanley ushered in the apprenticeship to the world. The memorable declaration of that noble Lord to the House of Commons, formed the groundwork of expectation to the people of England, of the results of their unparalleled munificence to the West Indian planters, and that declaration has been justly deemed the grand interpretation of the spirit and design of the apprenticeship clauses of the Abolition Act. Sir George Grey's standard of "reasonable expectation," appears from the first to have been low enough, and this, perhaps, is the chief cause of his present unenviable position as a minister of the crown charged with responsible duties, which he has notoriously failed to fulfil. I admit, notwithstanding, that he takes a philosophical view of the subject; that what has occurred is precisely what might have been foreseen, and that the apprenticeship has produced results which cannot fail to be recognized as the legitimate offspring of so unnatural a system.

But this is not a line of argument which the under Secretary for the Colonies is at liberty to take. If he abide by the apprenticeship, he is bound to see it carried out, through its whole extent of immunity and protection. The advocates of abolition have nothing to do with the comparisons which, without data, he institutes between the apprenticeship and slavery. They have a right to ask that the condition of society set forth in the clauses of the Abolition Act shall be *practically realized*. If this be conceded to be impossible—if it be indeed an *unreasonable expectation*, they are then entitled to characterize the apprenticeship as a fraud and a delusion, and to demand its immediate termination.

Sir George Grey says, he is "prepared to show that with regard to the conduct of individuals in the great majority of cases, there has been on the part of the West India proprietors and their agents in the Colonies, a *bonâ fide* adherence to the spirit as well as the letter of the Emancipation Act, and that they have given their cordial concurrence in carrying out the principles of that Act. The charges brought against the mass are, in fact, applicable only to a small majority."

In assuming this bold position, the Under Secretary for the Colonies has placed himself in direct opposition to Lord Glenelg, his superior and chief, who, in the House of Lords, has declared in the strongest language, that the violations of the law have been general and extreme. In support of his position, Sir George Grey has given quotations from the despatches of Lord Sligo and Sir Lionel Smith, and

various extracts from the Special Magistrates' Reports. Of the former class of documents it may be sufficient to state, that they require to be considered with reference to the source from whence they are derived; viz. the Reports of the Special Magistrates. If those officers had been placed (which they have not been) in a position independent of the planters; if they had received (which they have not) due support and countenance from the executive; and if, finally, they had shown themselves to be (what, as a body, they are not) worthy of the confidence of the British nation, the general result of the reports, as exhibited in the despatches of the Governors, would have been as valuable as it is now the contrary. But were the despatches in question conclusive evidence, and were they confirmed instead of contradicted by collateral information, based on more tangible data, they, by no means, bear out the hardy assertion of Sir George Grey, above quoted. The favourable colouring of the Governors is a thin disguise, through which the true state of the case is obscurely apparent. Both the Governors state explicitly that their powers are totally inadequate to carry out the remedial provisions of the law. They rejoice over the favourable disposition of some of the planters, (whom they and their superiors are most anxious to persuade themselves constituted a large majority) while they confess they have no means of enforcing the obedience of the contumacious minority.

It would have been a great moral miracle indeed, if, so circumstanced, the West India proprietors and their agents had, "of their own sweet will," "in the great majority of cases," given their "*bonâ fide* adherence to the spirit as well as the letter of the Emancipation Act." I shall, hereafter, have occasion to show that the very opposite of this is the truth, and that this acknowledged weakness of the local executive, of which the Colonial Office was fully and emphatically apprized by Lord Sligo two years ago, in his despatches, has been taken advantage of by the great majority of the planters to the fullest extent.

Before dismissing these important witnesses of Sir George Grey, I must observe that Lord Sligo, with all the weight of his character, experience, and humanity, has declared in favour of immediate emancipation, himself as a West India proprietor, setting a noble and magnanimous example; while Sir George Grey might have selected from the recorded declarations of Sir Lionel Smith, one as recent and far more relevant, than any which he has thought fit to quote. In his address to the assembly of the Island, the 29th of October last, Sir Lionel Smith declared that "the Island (no petty minority, but

the Island!) is subject to the reproach that the negroes, in some respects, are in a worse condition than they were in slavery!"

The extracts given by Sir George Grey from the Special Magistrates' Reports, are well worthy a careful perusal and attentive consideration. I must do the writers the justice to state, that with one or two doubtful exceptions, I believe them to be honourably distinguished from the majority of those holding the special commission. Their testimony is therefore valuable, and I cannot but express my unfeigned astonishment at the use which Sir George Grey has made of it. These extracts bear striking testimony to the patience, reasonableness, and docility of the negro, to his fitness for self-command, and to the regulation of his conduct by enlightened and moral influences. If there be an individual so uninformed as to talk of the danger of immediate emancipation, and of the necessity of preparation for the negro, (the justice of his claim to *immediate* personal freedom being on all hands conceded), such an one must per force be convinced of his error by the statements read by Sir George Grey. Special Justice E. D. Baynes, is the only magistrate who expresses himself at length, and in decided terms, respecting the advantage of an intermediate state. I have the pleasure of this gentleman's acquaintance, and am aware that he possesses literary talent of a high order. Motives of personal regard may not, however, deter me from stating that I consider his judgment on this point of as little value as that of any individual who could be named of those filling the same official station.

He is well known to entertain extremely unfavourable views respecting the ultimate destinies of the colony, and is believed to contemplate its social and political prospects through the distorting medium of crude and pre-conceived theory. He has lately been appointed editor of a newspaper, entitled the *West Indian*, established by Government for the ostensible purpose of diffusing light and intelligence among the negroes. The files of this novel hebdomadary, when viewed in reference to the class it is chiefly intended to benefit, present amusing specimens of the judgment and discrimination of its editor. In opposition to Captain Baynes, I will venture to put the opinion of E. B. Lyon, a magistrate of the highest standing with respect to character and ability, and from whom, also, Sir George Grey has largely quoted. He is a native of the Island, and his experience of the character and disposition of the negroes being co-extensive with his own life, is far more valuable than that of Captain Baynes, which does not date even so far back

as the commencement of the apprenticeship. His deliberate opinion, which has now been some months before the public, is expressed as follows:—"I have particularly and anxiously watched the conduct of those who have released themselves by purchase from their apprenticeship, not alone from the influence which their example would naturally have upon the remaining bondsmen, but also as an indication of the disposition of the labouring population after 1840; and the result has been, *that I firmly believe that the Island would have been in a far more prosperous condition had there been no intermediate state; that the apprenticeship has rather tended to retard than develop the energies of the peasantry.*"*

It is desirable to notice one circumstance respecting E. B. Lyon, alluded to by Sir George Grey, who says that he had been appointed "to a new district, in which abuse was suspected to have existed!" The Under-Secretary is great at insinuation! The removal of this exemplary magistrate is here represented as an instance of the superintending vigilance of the executive, while, on the contrary, it was the result of a successful intrigue on the part of the planters in his former district, who were weary of his humane and impartial administration of the law. His removal was received by them as a triumph, spoken by them with exultation, deemed by himself a token of disapproval and of censure, while it necessarily entailed on him a heavy pecuniary loss.

A principal object with Sir George Grey has been to show "the great improvement which has taken place in the social and moral condition of the negro under the present system." His sophistry consists in attributing results to the apprenticeship, which are owing to very different causes. I also, among others, have borne willing testimony to the extraordinary advance in morals and intelligence which the negroes have made within the last four years. The commencement of the change, however, dates further back than 1834, and progress has subsequently been made, not in consequence of the apprenticeship, but in despite of it. The Missionaries of most, if not of every denomination, would tell Sir George Grey, that much more would have been accomplished but for obstructions which the apprenticeship has perpetuated.

To the same effect, Sir George Grey quotes from a very interesting and important report of three Special Magistrates on the state of crime. The report was drawn up by special justices Hill, Ram-

* Vide "West Indies in 1837," page 452, 2nd edition.

say, and Higgins, in reply to a malicious and libellous presentment of the grand jury of Middlesex; the first-named gentleman being an active magistrate, and also the assistant-secretary of the governor, charged with the entire correspondence belonging to the Special Magistrates' department. The document refers to the state of the apprentice population in a district of country immediately surrounding Spanish Town, the seat of government, and I know of no single report stamped with so much ability and authority, or which throws so much light on the condition of the negroes. I regret that its great length precludes my quoting it entire, but the following extracts will show the reader with what dexterity the Under-Secretary for the Colonies has suppressed such parts even of the very documents on which he has attempted to rest his defence of the planters, as did not serve his special and immediate object:—

“When the British Government decided on abolishing colonial slavery, they provided for an intermediate state, during the continuance of which, the “laws then in force in the colonies were to be adapted to the new state and relations of society” which would follow the general manumission of the slaves. All the parts of the former institutions which ensured a continuation of useful and industrious habits were still retained, while those principles which were to enforce a steady adherence to social duty, through the common bonds of mutual dependence, reciprocal, regard, and united support, were to be founded on those motives of conduct in a free community which so essentially differ from those of slavery. ‘If circumspection and caution are a part of wisdom when we work only upon inanimate matter, surely they become a part of duty too, when the subject of our demolition and construction is not brick and timber, but sentient beings, by the sudden alteration of whose state, condition, and habits, multitudes may be rendered miserable.’ Like the actors in the French Revolution, to whom Burke addressed this remark, the men with whom we have had to deal in our public duties have considered that ‘an unfeeling heart and an undoubting confidence,’ are the sole qualifications to insure individual interest and public duty. There has been in too many instances little of ‘love and respect of his kind’ in the dealing of the master with his bond-servants, and too little of fear, too little of caution, in his calculations of their power to re-act upon him.

“The fearful decrease of the labouring population which marked the progress of colonial slavery was one of the strongest arguments for its abolition. The immediate release of the children under six years of age from all claims of the master, who held the parent as an apprenticed labourer, was supposed to lay the foundation of a future increasing population on the best and surest basis. One, however, of the most distressing controversies between the servant and the master, and one in

which the special justice has found himself a powerless arbiter, is the claim which the employer makes to the services of his female apprentices, *without any abatement whatever for the wants, necessities, and infirmities of her infant family.*

“Your Excellency’s predecessor laid down a rule deduced from the common dictates of humanity for the guidance of the magistrate in all these disputes. That a necessity should have arisen for this appeal to his high authority is sufficient to convince a dispassionate person that the question must have been general, and *the liability of pregnant women to repay the master the time lost in childbirth, or of mothers, that expended in the suckling and nursing of their children,* harsh, severe, and repulsive as it may seem, *was of constant reference to the special justice.* There could have been little sympathy, little regard, little of those common bonds of mutual dependence and support which form powerful links in uniting communities in a free state, where such a dispute could be referred to the arbitration of a magistrate; and the magistrate who could feel that the one duty on such a reference was adequate protection to the poor and helpless was likely at once *to be viewed more as a partisan than as a judge.* This was one great source of detaching the respect and affection which might have subsisted between a slave and his owner in the former state of things, and induced both to consider that they no longer had any community of interest. Each now stood on the concessions made by the letter of the law, and demanded his rights under its authority. The master, finding that there existed no compulsory enactment to enforce the continuance of the provisions usually given out from the stores of his plantation, such as herrings and corn, *withheld them altogether,* and threw the labourer on the proceeds of his grounds in his own days, to realize by their sale in the market, the means of purchasing the food which was no longer doled out to him. In addition to this privation, the portion of the week for cultivating the provision grounds was reduced to the least possible time. The grounds allotted are usually detached some miles from the plantation, and the reduction of the hours of labour from nine to eight daily, under the pretext that the concession of the four and a half hours in each week, under the 47th clause of the Abolition Act, (equivalent to half a day), might be divided into an hour on each working day, was virtually *an extinction of the time conceded by the law for working their provision grounds.* The Saturday was, under these circumstances, the only day available to the negro for the necessities of himself, his wife, and his infant children, now thrown upon him in a state of absolute dependence in health and in sickness. Any dereliction of duty subjected him to the forfeiture of his time to make good the loss of labour which the master sustained by his misconduct, as well as by his absence from work. The magistrate generally, in awarding punishment, did not hold it unreasonable to make the servant a debtor to his master to the extent to which he might be a loser

by his misconduct ; and, to aggravate the evils of his *dependent condition, the negro was deprived of his Saturday as a forfeiture to his master for his delinquency.*

These remarks are general, but there are circumstances in which this parish differs from all others, which are an aggravation of the social evils to which we have adverted.

With regard to the spirit of conciliation which the grand jury urge on our observance, we feel it does not so much rest with us to advise it (which is all that is within our power), as it does with the gentlemen of the grand jury themselves to practise it. In every instance in which gentlemen of their influence and condition in life have acted in this spirit, they have reaped the blessings which a kindly feeling never sows in vain. Where the usual store allowances of slavery have not been withheld ; where the infirmities of the women have received consideration, and the helplessness of their children obtained aid, contentment, orderly and diligent labour have prevailed, and the work of the plantation has been conducted with cheerfulness and good will. In instances in which a contrary policy has been observed, the authority and influence of the special justice have been interposed in vain. We are not unmindful while making this remark, of the injunction with which the Chief Justice closes his echo of the presentment of the grand jury, that we should teach the peasant labourer that his duty is “to earn his bread in the sweat of his brow.” We have the power, and we exercise it, to enforce toil, but no persuasion can secure the reward ; it is not seen in the penurious dealing which we have narrated, nor in the pictures of disease and squalid misery which have so often come under our notice in our public duties.”

The preceding observations refer to the evidence which Sir George Grey has adduced to prove that the “*contract*” has not been extensively violated by the planter, I wish now to consider the manner in which he has dealt with the statements which have been made to parliament and to the nation, of a directly contrary tendency.

Of them he speaks as “*individual instances of cruelty, the natural results of slavery ;*” and which, taking place under the present system, are “*brought fully to light, are subject to close investigation and are punishable by law, and which are exceptions to the present rule ;*” “*particular instances of oppression and wrong, which alone do not afford a fair view of the operation of the system ;*” “*evils which are the remnant of those inherent in slavery, and are gradually passing away.*” He protests “*against one case being selected from a thousand, while the remaining 999, of a totally different character, are carefully withheld or overlooked !*”

It cannot escape the remark of the most careless reader, that these

statements of Sir George Grey, if true, are conclusive against his own measure. He has taken away the only ground upon which *his* bill can possibly be defended! If the violations of the Abolition Act, are but as one in a thousand, and if they are already "punishable by law," what pretence remains for introducing a bill, establishing a despotism in every colony, and arming the Governor with unheard of and unconstitutional power? But, in fact, to quote Sir George Grey's expressions is alone sufficient to convict him of misrepresentation, and the charge of fraud, which he has brought against the advocates of abolition, recoils upon himself. "Individual instances" have, indeed, been brought forward, but they have been so numerous, so varied in circumstance, yet so uniform in character as to tend with irresistible force to establish not a number of exceptions, *but a general rule*. But these instances are but a part of the evidence against the system. There is the tabular view of punishments compiled from official records, to show that the negroes, notwithstanding their proved docility and good conduct, have been subjected to stripes by the million, and to the punishments of the treadmill, chain gang, and solitary cell, by the hundred thousand.

A fourth part of the labouring population of Jamaica have passed through the terrible workhouses of that colony since the commencement of the apprenticeship. In addition to this, the proprietary of Jamaica are convicted of a general violation of the law by the public acts of their representative body. Of the Local Abolition Law, Sir L. Smith writes, "I denounce it the worst law of all the late slave colonies." Yet this law, in itself a monstrous and glaring violation of the "contract," is the standard upon which the Special Magistrates frame their pseudo-favourable reports; and Sir George Grey would persuade us, while the *law* is so defective, that the *practices* of the planters have nearly come up to the required standard, and that the resistance of the Assembly to the proposed amelioration of the law, has been without a practical motive.

The Assembly have refused to put a stop to the flogging of women. They have passed vagrant, police, classification, and numerous other laws, in direct violation of what we are now told to consider a solemn "compact," binding, it would appear, upon the British Parliament and nation only. The Assembly have laid the recent remedial suggestions of Lord Glenelg on the table of the House, in silent contempt. Not a single protest has been heard from the proprietary against any part of their proceedings—not a single member has incurred censure or remonstrance from his planter constituency.

Various presentments of grand juries, and verdicts of petty juries exhibit, as Sir George Grey has cause to know, the same determined opposition to the carrying out of the protective provisions of the Abolition Act. The gathering of the planters in entire parishes to raise subscription-lists, for presents of plate and money to Special Magistrates, dismissed for proved and flagrant acts of cruelty, is another indication of the wishes and determination of the great majority.

Again, many "individual instances" illustrate the general working of the system. Such is the Narrative of Williams, which the Under-Secretary speaks of as "a case" of "direct infraction of the law."*

On the contrary, it is a history of the general violation of the law in an entire parish. In two districts out of that parish it exposes the tyrannical conduct of *successive* Special Magistrates, and proves by the uncontradicted evidence of numerous witnesses, that the workhouse of that parish, the most extensive in the Island, has been, from the commencement of the apprenticeship, a den of fiendish licentiousness and cruelty.

It is difficult to conceive that the evidence against the planters could, by possibility, have been of a more general and conclusive character than it is. The advocates of abolition have not therefore limited their view to "individual instances of cruelty," neither are these instances, when they occur, necessarily "brought fully to light" under the present system. It has been left for private individuals, by dragging them into public view, to compel investigation and redress; and there is too much reason to fear, that the darkest secrets of the prison-house remain yet undisclosed. Neither are the instances in question, "the remnant of those inherent in slavery;" the mere *debris*, as it were, of a former system. On the contrary, they are the peculiar characteristics of the apprenticeship. Such is the present workhouse discipline, of which such extraordinary revelations have been made, by Commissioners Gordon and Daughtrey, respecting St. Ann's; by the despatches of Lord Sligo, respecting those of Halfway-Tree, and St.-Thomas-in-the-East, by E. D. Baynes, respecting St. John's, and by the revolting scenes which are recorded in the Parliamentary papers respecting those of the parish

* Sir George Grey censures Joseph Sturge for not communicating Williams's case to Sir Lionel Smith. To this, it may be replied, that the officer did not possess the confidence either of the negroes, or their friends in Jamaica; and his public acts, up to that date, attest that he did not deserve their confidence. Did John Scoble obtain any redress of undeniable abuses in Guiana, by communicating their existence to Sir J. C. Smyth?

of Manchester, the parish of Hanover, the parish of Trelawney, the parish of St. Thomas-in-the-Vale, the city of Kingston, and even in Spanish Town, the very seat of the Executive Government. The treadmill is coeval only with the apprenticeship—it had no existence in slavery. The withholding of salt-fish, and other necessary allowances—the destruction of the hogs and poultry of the negro—the taking away the watchmen from their provision grounds, leaving the produce to be destroyed by the incursions of cattle—the neglect and cruelty towards the sick—the brutal treatment of pregnant women, of nursing mothers, of mothers of large families, and those advanced in age, all, as at present existing, are peculiar features of the apprenticeship. It is a task worthy of Sir George Grey, to seek to under-rate the wrongs of the apprentices, by comparing them with the possibly yet greater evils, which they endured during slavery.

I have now concluded what I had principally in view, in these observations, viz., to test the value of Sir George Grey's statements of the results of the apprenticeship. Other considerations are suggested by his speech, of great interest and moment, but which I must dismiss with a passing notice:—His assertions respecting British Guiana have already been disposed of, in the unanswerable speech of John Scoble, at Exeter Hall. One declaration of Sir George Grey, relative to this colony, deserves, however, especial attention.

John Scoble, by personal inquiry, brought to light the astounding fact, that the food of the apprentices of Demerara had been reduced by one-half from the quantity allowed by law during slavery. How does Sir George Grey meet this charge? In a manner truly chivalrous—by exonerating the planters, and taking the blame upon himself. He says, with immediate reference to this point, “if any defects exist in the laws in force there, as it respects the apprentices, the charge ought rather to be preferred against the Government, than against the proprietors, who may be compelled to submit to enactments by orders in Council.” Looking at the magnitude of the interests at stake, involving, not the comforts merely, but the very existence of the negro population of Guiana, it is not too much to state, that Sir George Grey has, in this instance, pleaded guilty by anticipation, to the gravest impeachment which could be preferred against a negligent or unworthy minister.

This is not the sole example which his speech furnishes of the misconduct of the Colonial Government. He boasts that in framing Lord Glenelg's Bill, the Government have implicitly followed the

suggestions of Lord Sligo. Can he state why Lord Sligo's emphatic warnings first uttered two years ago, in his official despatches, have been till now disregarded? Disregarded until Lord Sligo, in despair, appealed from the Colonial Office to the people by the publication of his striking pamphlet. For years has the Colonial Office been in possession of Lord Sligo's views, and of the data on which they were founded, yet not until the public feeling was loudly and indignantly expressed, were any steps taken by Sir George Grey, to remedy existing and acknowledged evils.

One additional remark in conclusion. Sir George Grey expresses his firm belief, "that the *sudden and violent disruption* of the ties which still bind the apprentice negro to his master, would insure the termination of the apprenticeship under circumstances the most adverse and inauspicious to the interests of the negroes themselves!" Oh, the beauty and utility of metaphor in the hands of the sophist! What is the present bond of union between master and apprentice? In the language of Sir George Grey, it is "*a modified coercion!*" violence and force, therefore, are required to prolong the apprenticeship. Their discontinuance would involve its extinction, and "the violent disruption of the ties" above mentioned, is a phrase as appropriate and intelligible as would be the *violent discontinuance of strife* between opposed and contending parties.

T. H.

